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ABSTRACT

A study examined the attitudes of employers who provided jobs for 37 of the graduates and a number of the dropouts from the University of Texas Competency-Based High School Diploma (CBHSD) Program for Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) clients that was implemented at five sites in Texas. Because of the restraints imposed on employers by the Privacy Act in giving information on hired graduates, follow-up information was available for only 45 percent of the 238 students/clients served by the program, and only 14 students had near-to-complete reports filed on them. What one can glean from the sparse information submitted by employers to CETA is that 37 graduates (roughly one-third of all graduates) secured some kind of employment. One-third of these worked in offices and less than one-quarter of them entered professional or management slots. In all likelihood, the public sector employers who had provided the bulk of work experience for candidates during the pilot project continued to be the employers for a majority of candidates after they completed components of the CBHSD program. (Related reports describing the structural and programmatic features of the project as a model and its student/client completion results are available separately--see note.) (MN)

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REPORT IV

EMPLOYER REPORT: FOLLOW-UP

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ANALYSIS OF THE COMPETENCY-BASED HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA PROGRAM FOR CETA CLIENTS

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PREFACE

This report is the fourth in a series of six descriptive analyses that constitute the final report of the Competency-Based High School Diploma (CBHSD) program for CETA clients from 1977-80. The six-part series represents an analysis of the CBHSD/CETA pilot project, which grew out of the Adult Performance Level (APL) Project developed by the University of Texas. The University also managed the operation of the joint venture funded by the Department of Labor for six Texas sites (Abilene, Austin, Brownsville, El Paso, Houston, and Temple). In all 238 students/clients were served.

This paper discusses the extent of and circumstances surrounding the kind of follow-up made of employers who hired graduates of the program. The scope of topics ranges from the overall statistics gathered, to the restraints imposed on employers by the Privacy Act in giving information on hired graduates, and finally to the types of employers who provided jobs for 37 of the graduates and a number of the dropouts. In particular, some detail is provided on the follow-up process conducted by local prime sponsors, and there is a description of the kinds of information being sought: e.g., salary increases, promotions, an employer's opinion of the kinds of workers these pilot project participants were in relation to other employees, to name but a few.

The findings from the pilot project indicate that follow-up information about participants (graduates and premature terminations) covered only 45% of the total enrollment. While 84% of the graduates were surveyed, the amount of information on them varied significantly. Only 14 had near-to-complete reports filed on them.

The reason why relatively little data were gathered on dropouts and graduates is the legal restraints set on the amount and kind of information employers could give on employees under the Privacy Act, passed in 1974. While accurate figures on the number of private and public sector employers who hired CBHSD/CETA graduates are not possible, the pilot project experience does indicate the probable ratio of public/private employers providing jobs. In that situation, more public sector employers were involved in offering work experience to CBHSD/CETA candidates.

In the follow-up period, 33 of the 37 graduates who were reported as working had positions as office workers, professional or management assignments, apprenticeships in various trades, and jobs as semi-skilled workers. The largest group (representing one-third of those surveyed) worked in some kind of office jobs. The next largest group (one-quarter)

held entry-level professional or management slots. The remaining graduates worked as assistants to people in the trades (e.g., plumbing, construction, etc.) or in such jobs as couriers, kitchen help, baggage handlers, and sheet rockers.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. Data Sources

Baseline data for this report came from five sources. There were, first, the 59 follow-up forms filed by CETA counselors on dropouts and completions. A second group of materials were the forms submitted by the graduates of the pilot project (a total of 32, with a number of them having been reported on by CETA as well). The third set of papers were the three reports submitted in narrative form by CETA counselors on 38 participants who had not responded to earlier efforts at follow-up. Some of these inquires resulted in a former client's filing a follow-up form or adding a second follow-up report on a dropout or graduate. Therefore, while the number of forms and reports totals 129 documents, they cover post-pilot project activities of only 102 participants.

A fourth source was Report III: Student/Client Completion Results. And finally, helpful information was provided by the APL Project Field Coordinator to NFIE in telephone conversations on 8/11/80 and 8/19/80.

B. Overall Statistics

Report III pointed out that follow-up information about successful completions and premature departures covered only 45% of the total enrollment. And, while follow-up was done on 76 of the 90 graduates (84%), the amount of information gathered on them varied significantly. The degree of useful data ranged from comprehensive to minimal. The four kinds of follow-up documentation could be characterized in the following way:

- Full accounting (of a graduate's activities)
- Near-complete follow-up
- Partial reporting
- Minimal information

The most complete accounting of a former participant came from having two reports: the CETA counselor's follow-up form and the graduate's own accounting of work experience and opinions of the CBHSD. There are only eight graduates out of the 76 reported on (or 10%) with this kind of comprehensive and detailed information for the follow-up period. Near-complete records were those that CETA counselors submitted, which not only contained information for each of the three times designated in the 90-day follow-up but also lengthy comments. This was true of half a dozen follow-up efforts.

More common was the partial reporting provided in one of the two forms (filed by the former participant or by CETA), which covered only half the items presented for review. Thirty-four (34) graduates were accounted for in this manner. The least amount of information (including a brief remark as to whereabouts or where one was working) was provided on 28 individuals.

Therefore, documentation on 68 completions contained little information regarding the various indicators of success, such as a person's salary increases, promotions, conduct on the job, suitability of occupation in relation to a graduate's career goals, his/her satisfaction with a work assignment, and opinion of the Competency-Based High School Diploma program.

II. CONSTRAINTS ON DATA COLLECTION

A. The Privacy Act

The reason why relatively little data were gathered on dropouts and graduates is the legal restraints set on the amount and kind of information employers could give on employees under the Privacy Act of 1974. While this law protected employers and employees alike from unwarranted questions by outsiders, it also precluded employers from supplying the kind of research data necessary for interpreting completion results.

The only set of circumstances in which one might theoretically gain particulars on an employee's effectiveness from an employer would be in a smaller town, where a manpower counselor already enjoyed a daily professional and/or personal relationship with such an employer. Such proximity and opportunity for accessing information on former CETA clients were not present in this project's follow-up process. The only information an employer could and did divulge to CETA counselors was whether the person in question was currently or had recently been employed at his firm or establishment.

B. CETA Policy Regarding Follow-Up of Non-Positive Terminations

CETA staff in the six sites did not make a practice of following up on participants who terminated for nonpositive reasons. Part of the reason for this was that in sites like Houston, where logistical problems already presented major problems in terms of programming and transportation, such a follow-up would bring unnecessary strains on the energies and time of the staff. In only one site (Brownsville) was a systematic attempt made to trace the participants who dropped out. This resulted from concern on the part of the CETA/CBHSD staffs that so many students/clients were leaving the program (anywhere from four to ten in a month). Information regarding the whereabouts of dropouts from other programs occurred in an informal way, but did reveal a number of things. At least a dozen were known to have found a job on their own, which sometimes involved a move to another city. There were eight who left to handle a family crisis.

III. EMPLOYERS WHO HIRED CETA CLIENTS

A. Pilot Project Experience

Trying to determine what numbers of jobs were provided by public or private sector is as difficult as interpreting the job performance among the successful completions of the pilot project. However, there are available data on the extent of involvement on the part of employers from both sectors during the pilot project, which probably indicates the degree of involvement they played in the post-pilot project period.

During the pilot project, the primary local providers of jobs came from the public sector. These employers offered assignments requiring minimal to medium levels in skill attainment. For some students who completed such programs, the work experience assignment could and did lead to permanent employment. In this pilot project at least half a dozen graduates were known to have succeeded at doing this.

Those who did not want formal classes in a training school sometimes had the option of doing OJT, a kind of apprenticeship extended by an employer in the private sector. However, the kinds of opportunities for this apprenticeship depended on a number of factors. Among them were the number of local industries in a community as well as the willingness of private employers in them to participate.

Three sites (Abilene, Houston, and Temple) were known to have a fairly active involvement of public and private sector alike in providing work and/or skill training to project participants. Other sites, however, were not so fortunate. More often than not the number of private employers was far fewer than their public sector counterparts. And in one site (Brownsville), the private employers who were approached to accept CETA clients for OJT were unwilling to participate. This happened even though CETA's policy was to pay the wages for a candidate accepted in an apprenticeship program.

B. Follow-Up Period

Thirty-three (33) out of the 37 graduates who were reported as working in the 90-day follow-up period had positions as general office workers, professional or management assignments, apprenticeships in various trades, and jobs as semi-skilled workers. The largest group, or about one-third (13) worked in offices as receptionists, clerks, secretaries, data processors, or bookkeepers. Less than a quarter of them entered professional or management slots (e.g., dental/nursing/teaching aides, bank tellers, along with individual assignments as copy artist, garment inspector, review technician, and

one who, as a cosmetologist, owned and operated her own business). Five entered a trade, e.g., carpentry, electrical work, plumbing and construction. The remainder had such jobs as couriers, kitchen help, baggage handlers, and sheet rockers.

Only one was self-employed and three worked for their fathers. The others found work in either public or private sectors, with a substantial majority finding employment in the public sector.

In summary, what one can glean from the sparse information submitted by employers to CETA, due to the provisions of the Privacy Act, is that 37 graduates, or roughly one-third of the overall graduate base, secured some kind of employment. And, in all likelihood, the public sector employers, who had provided the bulk of work experience for candidates during the pilot project, continued to be the employers for a majority of candidates after they completed the components of the CBHSD/CETA program.